

Doc Number: 4-12a	Lead: RB – Head of Service - Mental Health and Housing Support	Last Full Review: April 2025
Tick one of the below for review/changes made : Full review and changes made ☒ (add changes summary to table below) Full review, no changes made ☐ Changes made but no full review ☐ (add changes summary to table below)		Reviewer / Editor: RB – Head of Service - Mental Health and Housing Support Changes Approved By: RB – Head of Service - Mental Health and Housing Support Reviewed and edited in-line with the Beacon? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Unacceptable Behaviour Towards Staff and Contractors Policy

Document Change Details

Date	Summary of Changes Made
Jan 2024	All P&Ps revert to version 01 as approval process & version control moved to Sharepoint. Version number no longer shown on the document
02/04/2025	Inclusion of roles and responsibilities in accordance with Service Delivery Model

1.0 BACKGROUND

Southdown has a duty of care to its staff (and contractors) to ensure that they can work in safe, non-threatening environments where they are treated with professional respect and protected from unnecessary risk or harassment.

The principles in this policy apply to people who may demonstrate unacceptable behaviour to our staff, clients, their families and friends, employees of other organisations, and the general public.

We will take account of individual needs and behaviours when applying this policy.

People may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. A client being persistent, forceful or determined can be a positive advantage when pursuing an enquiry. However, the actions of clients may result in unacceptable behaviour towards staff or unreasonable demands.

Examples of this type of behaviour include:

- a persistent refusal to accept a decision or explanation
- a repeated refusal to follow an appropriate course of action (e.g. the feedback procedure or a particular appeals procedure)
- repeated contact with a service or particular employee or group of employees (by either telephone, email, letter or personal visits) about the same issue without presenting new information.

These actions may be unacceptable, particularly where they take up a disproportionate amount of time and resources, which could be used to deliver services to others.

2.0 POLICY

Policy Aims

To deal fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately with all clients, including those whose actions we consider unacceptable.

To provide a service accessible to all clients. However, we retain the right, where clients' actions are unacceptable, to restrict or change access to our service.

To ensure other clients and Southdown staff do not suffer any disadvantage from clients who act in an unacceptable manner.

Policy

Staff can complain about harassment, discrimination or behaviour they find offensive even when it is not directed at them.

Southdown can become legally liable for 'Third Party Harassment' if staff are subject to harassment by a third party, and Southdown takes no action to protect the worker from further incidents. To mitigate this, we will always take appropriate and prompt action when staff report harassment by a third party.

We will inform the police of incidents where physical violence is used or threatened against our staff or their families.

The procedures associated with this policy will include monitoring to ensure that the policy is being applied fairly and consistently.

For the purposes of this policy there are two main types of unacceptable behaviour.

Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour

Violence is not restricted to physical harm. It includes behaviour or language (whether oral or written) that may cause staff to feel, harassed, afraid, threatened or abused.

Examples of these behaviours are as follows:

- Threats against the individual or their family
- Physical violence
- Personal verbal abuse
- Derogatory remarks and rudeness
- Inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations

Language is considered to be abusive when it contains sexist, racist or homophobic comments, threatens acts of violence, is intimidatory or includes persistent bad language and swearing directed at the member of staff.

Harassment

This is when clients or their representatives make persistently unreasonable demands on our staff, either through the nature of, or the frequency of approaches made. What amounts to harassment will depend on the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and the seriousness of the issues raised.

Examples of behaviours that may be considered harassment when persistent include:

- Demanding responses within unreasonable time-scales
- Insisting on speaking to a particular staff member
- Continual phone calls, emails, faxes, letters or visits to offices
- Repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint

These behaviours are unacceptable if they start to impact substantially on the work of staff by taking up an excessive amount of staff time and resources and/or causing the staff involved significant stress or anxiety.

When an incident occurs, once the staff member has shared with their manager, it is the manager's responsibility to initiate the procedures associated with this policy.

It is then the responsibility of the manager to inform senior managers and ensure the policy and procedures are adhered to.

A person who is subject to a restriction to their contact with us can appeal against that restriction. The appeal will be considered by a designated employee who was not involved in the original decision.

We reserves the right to end support where behaviour of a client continues to be unacceptable and it is not deemed appropriate or realistic to continue to offer a service.

We will involve the police or take legal action, e.g. an injunction, where this is deemed necessary.